

# TISINGAL: The Lost Mine of Panama

By Charles Melville Brown

IT IS not improbable that during the dry season of 1910 some trace of the once famous mine of "Tisingal" will be found, as by Law Third of January 2, 1903, passed by the national assembly of Panama, the immense savannas and selvage of the Pacific slope of Panama are thrown open to acquisition on very favorable terms and already a number of Americans, especially of the Canal Zone, have taken up land there.

In the westernmost part of Panama, bordering on Costa Rica, lies the province of Chiriqui, the richest of the seven provinces constituting the Republic of Panama. Its north coast is washed by the Caribbean sea, known to the Spanish conquerors as the North sea, while the island-dotted Pacific, or South sea, washes its southern shores. Twenty miles from the Atlantic side and 40 miles from the Pacific is the highest crater of the "Volcan de Chiriqui" or Chiriqui volcano, rising nearly 12,000 feet above sea level. Two other craters of lesser height rise one on either side of the main crater; then a sheer drop of several thousand feet of sulphur-coated rock to the highest signs of vegetation. Below this on the Pacific slopes stretch beautiful rolling llanos or steppes, lower and lower, on down to the palm-fringed coast line.

Somewhere on these immense slopes lies the lost mine of the Indians, "Tisingal," known to and worked by the early Spanish settlers, who changed its name to "La Estrella," or Mine of the Star.

During the year 1833-34, in going through the archives at Cartago, Costa Rica, some official documents pertaining to this mine were found and permission was obtained from the Costa Rican government for their publication. Shortly thereafter a company was formed in Cartago to send out exploring parties, and although considerable time and money were wasted and several lives lost in an endeavor to locate this mine, no indications of its whereabouts were found.

Reprints of some of the documents referred to have come into the hands of the writer, in which is preserved the old style Spanish in which they were originally written during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Translations of these papers have been made and the information contained therein summarized, to which have been added data obtained through a personal acquaintance with the country described. During last year an unsuccessful attempt was made by the writer to ascend the highest crater of the Chiriqui volcano for the purpose of verifying certain information purported to have been secured in the year 1605 from this point and pertaining to the Tisingal mine. During the dry season of this year a second attempt will probably be made.

Among the documents consulted is one that, literally translated, reads as follows:

"Within the limits of the department of Chiriqui, contiguous to the Republic of Costa Rica, exist places rich in gold, known by the names of Tisingal, Quebrada Ancha, Quebrada de Oro and others quite important. The first of these places was explored some time ago by a Spanish colony, which in the year 1591 founded the city of Concepcion de la Estrella, near this mine of great wealth. The excessive stinginess of the conquerors reduced the Indians of the locality to the condition of slaves, they being forced by the Spanish to work, mining the gold of the Tisingal. These Indians became tired of the excessive work and had treatment and became desperate. In the year 1611 they revolted against their oppressors and exterminated them; but other Spaniards at the place of the mutiny again compelled the Indians to resume the working of the mine and made harder for them their state of slavery. This almost eliminated the Indians from this stretch of country.

"On the twenty-eighth of September, some years after these happenings, the Indians returned, and without pity or consideration took the life of every foreigner living in the country; and not only this, but, carrying stones from distant localities, they covered up and destroyed all traces of the workings of the mines, and they also razed all houses and churches belonging to the Spaniards. The only traces remaining of these ancient buildings today are the foundations of the church and a bell belonging to it.

"At last the news of the new rebellion reached Cartago in Costa Rica, where immediate preparations were made for revenge. It is known that at the beginning of the year 1710 the government at Cartago sent 200 men by the way of Boruca and Tula to San Jose Cabecar, a town to the east about 15 leagues from Concepcion. This expedition took 500 Indians of both sexes prisoners and reduced them to a state of slavery, and as such consigned them to the inhabitants around about Cartago upon their return to that place. These prisoners and all other Indians they met along the way were massacred shortly thereafter.

"From that time all Indians living in the mountains in all directions up to a distance of 70 leagues turned bitter enemies of the foreigners and up to a few years ago would have nothing to do with the white races. Due to these events all traces of the villages of Turrialba, Tula, Atirro, San Jose Cabecar and other places that lay on the route to Concepcion de la Estrella and Tisingal were lost and the trails of communication with the mines were covered with brush and completely destroyed, so that after 40 years in Cartago no knowledge was to be obtained as to the locality of the Estrella and practically no person living knew or had seen the mines at

Tisingal.

"Due to the hostility and cruelty of the Indians, together with the dangers of the trails and the unhealthiness of the country, people gradually began to forget about these mines and whoever spoke of making an expedition for the purpose of discovering these mines was considered to be committing suicide.

The slopes of the Chiriqui volcano are traversed by numerous rivers. In many places not more than a mile apart—wild, rushing mountain torrents that form navigable rivers near the coast, many of which are constantly changing their courses. Along the banks of these rivers the Spaniards found the richest Indian villages. The Indians extracted gold from the sands of many of these rivers and worked it into weird figures representing alligators, frogs, birds, turtles, fish, snakes, bells, plates, images and others, which it was the custom to bury with the owners thereof in the rock-walled tombs in which their dead were interred.

Among the documents referred to are found the records of an expedition that set out from the city of Garci-Munoz in Costa Rica, in the year 1563, for Quepo, Couto, Boruca and the valley of Guaymi. An extract from this document literally translated reads as follows:

"Going up the Guaymi valley one arrives at a place called Couto, where much gold has been found, and the natives have it worked into all forms; and on being questioned as to where they obtained it they stated that they had gotten it in very big grains from a river four days' journey from that place. In the dominion of an Indian cacique called Ucarai. Not one day's march from Couto lies the village of Turucaca, the inhabitants of which stated that they had obtained gold in the same river as the inhabitants of Couto. The provinces of Couto and Turucaca lie 50 leagues from the city of Garci-Munoz at the beginning of the valley of Guaymi, 10 leagues from the South sea in front of the Golfo Dulce. It is known that following up the Guaymi valley to the mountains toward the north there are to be found numerous villages, such as Quepo, Couto, Boruca, Acl, Uriaba, Xarixaba, Yabo, Duba, Cabara, Barerto, Tahiete, Arabora, Cabangara, Quecabangara.

The following year, 1564, another expedition set out from Cartago, Costa Rica, to explore this same country, and the chronicler, writing of their discoveries, says:

"Crossing the province of Ara and passing the valley of Cosca, we arrived in the province of Terbi and made our camp in the village of Cocuru, which lies in the valley of Duy. And the Indians having brought to the leader a great quantity of gold, he sent the slaves to explore, and they brought back such large pieces that the leader himself decided to explore. We then arrived at a river called La Estrella, which is the principal one as to the quantity of gold found.

"... from Cartago the expedition returned to the province of Terbi, to the village of Cururu, in the valley of the Duy (Indian name for Quequexque); and from there we went to the big river which had already been named Rio de la Estrella."

Since the sixteenth century the land bordering the Sixtola river, which lies to the north of the Chiriqui volcano and which empties into the Caribbean sea, had been in dispute between the governments of Costa Rica and that of Panama. At that time it was claimed by both the governor of Costa Rica and the governor of Veraguas. The province of Chiriqui adjoins Sixtola and formerly formed part of the province of Veraguas, now one of the seven provinces of Panama. After the independence of Panama in 1903 this dispute again arose, due to a great extent, to changes in the names of many of the rivers of this part of the two countries, some of which still retain their Indian names, while others have been renamed. The question was finally submitted to President Fallieres of France for arbitration and an entirely new boundary line was traced in accordance with his findings.

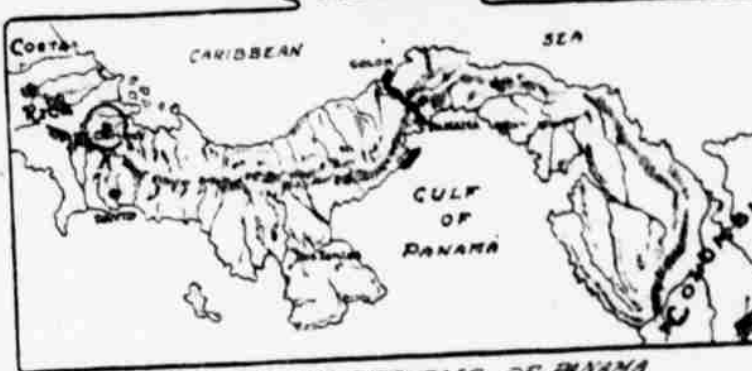
The Indians inhabiting the country lying near



PANAMANIAN INDIAN IN NATIVE CANOE



BIRD-SHAPED WHISTLE OF LOST COLOR WARE



MAP OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

the border line of Costa Rica and Chiriqui have always been hostile and in several instances have risen against the whites and massacred them. The Talamanca Indians, who still inhabit these parts, were especially bellicose.

The existence of the "Tisingal" mine has never been doubted, nor is it considered the product of the fertile imagination of the natives of Chiriqui. At Cana, in the province of Panama, at the present time there is being operated a gold mine formerly worked by the Spaniards. Several years ago, while blasting in one of the galleries of the Cana mine an aperture was made into what proved to be buried the remains of a gold mine worked several centuries ago. Leather buckets, with straps that fit around the forehead and around the shoulders of the mine workers and instruments of steel were found in a good state of preservation. The mouth of this mine had been so completely hidden that mining operations had been carried on for years almost paralleling the entrance shaft, without the engineers suspecting its proximity. Records of the old Cana mine have never been fixed before.

Gold can be found in almost all the rivers of Chiriqui. In 1859 there were discovered the first Indian graves, from which were taken gold ornaments, stone figures, arrow points, etc. Since this time there have been found in Chiriqui hundreds of these Indian graves, known to the present day natives by the name of "guacas." The writer himself opened up one grave from which he took 18 pieces of pottery.

It is a well-known fact that the half-Indian natives of Chiriqui, knowing the whereabouts of a rich "guacal," prefer to work it alone and to sell the gold found only in such quantities as their needs may require. They are suspicious of the white man, this suspicion and distrust being inbred in them and handed down in tradition from their ancestors, who in truth had cause to hate that race. A hunting and exploring party that recently returned from the vicinity of Buenos Aires and Boruca, in the heart of the Indian country to the west of David, reported that although they were not openly attacked by the Indians yet they were conscious of being constantly watched; that food was scarcely obtainable, and that on several occasions they found the water of the springs muddled, apparently but a few minutes before their arrival. If this report be true, and there is every reason to believe that it is, inasmuch as it is but a repetition of former ones of a similar nature, then it is quite evident that the party were not cognizant of the customs, likings and language of the natives with whom they had to deal.

Odd inscriptions and decorations are found carved on volcanic boulders in many parts of Chiriqui, and these inscriptions, according to the Indians, indicate the burying grounds of the caciques. Many of these decorations appear on the pottery found in the graves and in the ethnological report referred to are classified.

Gold-bearing copper ore has been found in many districts in Chiriqui, especially in that of Bugaba, in which "Tisingal" is in all probability located, the analysis of which has shown 15 per cent. copper bearing two per cent. gold.

The Panamanian government is at the present time planning the construction of a railroad from David in Chiriqui to the city of Panama, which, when built, will greatly open up this part of the country and make it more accessible. The Indians of Chiriqui will give way before the advance of civilization and the earth will give up another of her treasures so well hidden for centuries by nature's barriers aided by the avenging hand of the vanquished American.

## Happenings From Over The State

### GRAIN LAW TO BE ENFORCED.

Writ of Error Does Not Act as Supersedes, Says Major.

Jefferson City.—Although the R. J. House case, involving the validity of the law prohibiting the deduction of 100 pounds from the weight of a car of grain for dirt, has been taken on a writ of error to the United States supreme court, Attorney General Major says this writ does not act as a supersedeas and that during the pendency of the case there and its final decision that the law will be enforced to the letter.

The Missouri supreme court upheld the law in a recent decision. Major believes this will amount to a saving of \$750,000 to shippers. The law was contested by the Kansas City board of trade. The deduction by the grain exchanges have always been made with the consent of the shippers.

### MAJOR FILES TAX CASE WRIT.

Missouri Actual Value Assessment Suit to Supreme Court.

Jefferson City.—Attorney General Major forwarded his petition for a writ of certiorari in the Hildekoper mandamus proceedings to the clerk of the United States supreme court. If the petition is granted the records in that case, which was brought by Arthur Hildekoper against the state board of equalization, to compel it to assess property at its actual value, will be passed up to the supreme court of the United States for review. The case is pending in the United States district court at St. Louis.

Attorney General Major says the case will not amount to anything, as the United States supreme court has already held in a similar case taken up from Missouri when Dockery was governor that when the board acts its action is final.

### MISSING FATHER FOUND DEAD.

Kansas Cityans Save Sire's Body From Kirksville Students.

Kirksville.—The body of Alonso Thompson, who had been missing for 12 years, was found by his two sons, Ralph and James F. Thompson of Kansas City, in the dissecting room of the Kirksville School of Osteopathy, after they had traced their father from towns in Missouri to St. Louis and to Kirksville.

Thompson disappeared from Kansas City in 1888, and his sons have since been making desperate efforts to find him. They first got trace of him in a St. Louis hospital.

### "SHOW ME" SONS ORGANIZE.

Missourians in California Planning Association at Los Angeles.

Los Angeles, Cal.—The "show-me" movement in Los Angeles is now to advance by leaps and bounds and still longer bounds. About 200 of the sons of Missouri gathered in the committee room of the chamber of commerce and organized.

The following officers were chosen by the Missourians: A. J. Harshbarger, ex-chairman; General C. C. Allen, secretary; W. G. Kuhns, A. B. Jamison, J. G. Berry, J. J. Gilmore and E. D. Woolam.

### HADLEY NOT IN SENATE RACE.

Governor Not Even "Favorably Disposed" Toward Candidacy.

Kansas City.—Governor Hadley, accompanied by Governor Willson of Kentucky, arrived here from St. Louis. Both were on the program of the dinner of the Kansas City Bar association at the Hotel Baltimore.

Governor Hadley was asked about his senatorial ambition. "My position can be expressed briefly," the governor said, "I am not a candidate, and I am not even favorably disposed toward the idea of becoming a candidate."

### Church Expels Claycomb.

Joplin.—By unanimous vote of the 220 members present, the congregation of the First Baptist church adopted resolutions presented one month ago by the committee of deacons, expelling former Lieutenant Governor S. H. Claycomb from the church. This was done because of his action in purchasing liquor in Kansas City on Sunday and quoting from the Bible in an anti-prohibition speech last December. The vote was taken without discussion.

### Appoints County Official.

Jefferson City.—C. E. Ernst was appointed by Governor Hadley circuit clerk and recorder of Gentry county, to succeed Horace J. Perry, deceased.

### St. Louisans Buy Alt Lands.

Cape Girardeau.—The Alt estate, consisting of 15,000 acres of land in Cape Girardeau county, has been sold by Capt. G. E. Alt to the Northrup Land company of St. Louis, the price received being more than \$300,000.

### Resigns Chair at M. S. U.

Columbia.—Dr. Arthur O. Lovejoy, professor of philosophy at the University, has resigned and accepted a call to the chair of philosophy at Johns Hopkins university, Baltimore, Md.

## MADE WELL AND STRONG

By Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound

Jefferson, Iowa.—"When my baby was just two months old I was completely run down and my internal organs were in terrible shape. I began taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and mother wrote and told you just how I was. I began to gain at once and now I am real well."—Mrs. W. H. BURGER, 700 Cherry St., Jefferson, Iowa.

### Another Woman Cured.

Glenwood, Iowa.—"About three years ago I had falling and other female troubles, and I was nothing but skin and bones. I was so sick I could not do my own work. Within six months I was made sound and well by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. I will always tell my friends that your remedies cured me, and you can publish my letter."—Mrs. C. W. DUNN, Glenwood, Iowa.

If you belong to that countless army of women who suffer from some form of female ill, just try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. For thirty years this famous remedy has been the standard for all forms of female ill, and has cured thousands of women who have been troubled with such ailments as displacements, fibroid tumors, ulceration, inflammation, irregularities, backache, etc.

If you want special advice write for it to Mrs. Pinkham, Lynn, Mass. It is free and always helpful.

### PATENT YOUR IDEAS.

They may bring you results of great value. Free. Write for particulars to A. C. McGee, Patent Attorney, 100 N. 2nd St., St. Louis, Mo.

### HUNTING 'EM BOTH.



Texas Bear (the senator on a walking trip in the mountains)—Hully gee! Is the president after you, too?

### How He Expressed It.

Every small boy—the right kind, anyhow—thinks his own mother the symbol of all perfection. Few, however, have the ability to express their admiration as prettily as the little hero of the following anecdote:

Richard's mother was putting him to bed, and as she kissed him good night, she said: "Do you know you are the whole world to mamma?"

"Am I?" he answered, quickly. "Well, then, you're heaven and the north pole to me!"—Youth's Companion.

### Fool Remarks.

"The inability of courtesy remarks that some people feel called upon to interject into conversation calls for a permanent commission in lunacy," said the man with the ingrowing growth.

"Now, the other day I was telling Jones going down on the subway that my four-year-old had swallowed a safety pin, and we were up half the night with him."

"It was an accident, of course," said that idiot Jones."

### Remedies Too Costly.

Get out the old-fashioned household remedy book and scratch out two remedies, one advising raw beefsteak spread on a bruise and the other advising bacon for a felon. We eat waste beefsteak and bacon on bruises and felons these days.—Athens Globe.

## What Thinking Takes Out

Of the brain, and activity out of the body, must be

## Put Back by Proper Food

Or brain-fag and nervous prostration are sure to follow.

If you want to know the keenest joy on earth—the joy that comes with being well, try

## Grape-Nuts

Food

### "There's a Reason"

POSTUM CEREAL CO., Ltd., Battle Creek, Mich.